

HISTORICAL HOMES

OF INDIANAPOLIS



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Cities, like individuals, change with the passing of time. The gradual transformation in the aspect of a city takes place almost imperceptibly, and the once familiar scenes pass from view and are lost to our sight. Yet there is much to be learned from a study of those elements of a past era that still survive among us. From them we can seize upon, and bring to our era, the elegance and grace that distinguished a period of our city's history, of which we can all be proud.

The old homes of Indianapolis, that have survived the changes of passing time, are one of these elements and this booklet records a few historical notes concerning them.



T H E M c B R I D E R E S I D E N C E

The property at 1434 North Park Avenue is remembered as the former home of one of the city's outstanding citizens of the post Civil War period, Judge Robert W. McBride.

Judge McBride was a member of President Lincoln's personal, mounted bodyguard, and was the author of a book published by Bobbs-Merrill in 1926, "Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln." He was very active in the affairs of the Grand Army of the Republic and served as Senior Vice Commander and Judge Advocate of the organization.

Judge McBride was a man of many accomplishments, scholar, soldier, attorney, judge and naturalist. His library required three full rooms to house, and it was believed to be one of the largest private book collections then existent in the city.

His wife, Mrs. Ida S. McBride, served as National President of the Women's Relief

Corps during World War I, and the property was used in 1913 and 1914 as National Headquarters for that organization.

The home itself was located in the best residential section of the city as it existed at the time, and was surrounded by flower gardens of unusual beauty, reflecting the love of nature, which was inherent in the judge's character.

The interior was distinguished by a winding staircase which reached from the first to third floor, fine woodwork throughout, scrolled ceilings, and the lovely fireplaces of the period.

The many activities of importance, in which both the Judge and Mrs. McBride were engaged, made their home a focal point of interest during the period of readjustment following the Civil War.



ALBERT E. FLETCHER MANSION

During the period 1848 to 1900 many beautiful homes were built in Indianapolis by men who figured prominently in the economic, political and social life of the country. In these homes many of our country's great were received and entertained, and in some of them famous people of other lands were received as guests.

Among these is the Albert E. Fletcher mansion at 1200 North Pennsylvania Street. Albert E. Fletcher was the youngest son of Calvin Fletcher who came to Indianapolis in 1826 soon after Indiana was admitted to the Union as a state. In 1873 Albert Fletcher commissioned Mr. Curzon, a local architect, to design and supervise the building of his home.

Mr. Curzon did his work well, combining beauty and permanence. The mansion was so well built that no structural changes have been necessary. The floors are a full six inches thick and they rest on 3 x 12 hard maple beams. The great heavy doors are so well balanced that even after a lapse of eighty years they can be moved with a fingertip and will remain where moved.

The rich interior woodwork, imported from France and northern Italy, is the product of the most highly skilled artisans of a period famed for such work, and is

virtually irreplaceable. Of finest walnut inset with oak and bronze and overlaid in places with a gold leaf design, it is a fine example of a craft that is fast disappearing. Mr. Fletcher brought two Swiss architects to this country to supervise this part of the work and it required three full years to complete. The many fireplaces, each one differing in design from all the others, give to each room its own distinct charm.

In this setting the Fletchers made their home, bringing rare furniture and art objects from all over the world to create an atmosphere of comfortable and gracious living. Many gay social events took place in this lovely mansion, centering around the magnificent ballroom on the third floor. Here many prominent citizens of the period danced to the measured cadence of the waltz.

While it is now a supper club, it still retains much of the atmosphere that is never entirely lost in old houses, and one can still sense something of the flavor of times-gone-by on entering. The management of LaRue's has shown sympathy and understanding by preserving as much of the original decor as was possible under modern conditions.



T H E W A L K E R R E S I D E N C E

Through the years changes in the economic and social life of the nation have affected the ultimate destiny of many fine old homes. Because of these changes many of them have passed from the scene of modern life. Fortunately some have survived and serve as examples of the homes of an era.

Such a place is the Walker residence built in 1869 by Mr. H. G. Bals and his wife, Mrs. Christina M. Bals, at 951 North Delaware Street. In later years it became the home of their daughter, Mrs. John Walker, whose husband subsequently headed the Aetna Trust Company.

Mr. Bals built his home in the tradition of his era, combining beauty and permanence, and enriching the interior with the fine wood-

work of the period, and the exquisite design of its many fireplaces.

Thirty-seven years ago the property was purchased by the firm of Hisey and Titus, and was enlarged by the addition of the present north wing. The firm thoughtfully used all the details of design found in the original structure. Great care was taken in doing this work. The brick used was recovered from another old home of the same period, which was currently being razed, and was laid in place by a mason capable of matching faithfully the brickwork in the original house.

It is gratifying that through understanding and sympathetic treatment many landmarks such as this old home are being preserved as reminders of an era which did much to give lustre and importance to the city.



THE HENDRICKS RESIDENCE

At 1526 South New Jersey one can see one of the really old-time homes of Indianapolis. It is generally known as the Hendricks home, after Thomas A. Hendricks who was Vice-President of the United States and Governor of Indiana.

It is believed that the original house was built by Hervey Bates who also built "Bates House." It is certain, however, that Thomas Hendricks bought the home in 1865 and lived there over seven years.

The home has passed since then to James C. Woodruff, Isaiah Mansur, Colonel Coburn, and finally to its present owners, Mr. and Mrs. William Faust.

The Hendricks place is said to have been one of the stations of the "Underground Railroad" in the Civil War era. Certainly it was an important place in those times as Colonel Coburn was a prominent figure in both State and Federal affairs. As a civic

leader he is remembered here as the man who dedicated the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, influenced the retention of Garfield Park, and secured a Federal Post Office for the city.

During the period when Colonel Coburn lived there it was a gathering place for distinguished men and women of the period. In the old tower room can still be seen the initials of many of them carved on the tower walls, and bearing dates in the 70's and 80's.

The house has been well kept by Mr. and Mrs. Faust and it still retains the distinctive characteristics of the homes of the period. Mrs. Faust, since early childhood, had cherished a desire to live in the house, and as a result has done nothing which would detract from its original character. She still retains many of the old furnishings of the home in the belief that they will one day be of special interest to future generations of Indianapolis people.



T H E C H R I S T I A N R E S I D E N C E

Another of the old Indianapolis homes which can still be seen, is the Christian Home at 4200 Brookville Road at Pleasant Run. This old homestead is 111 years old, having been built by "Uncle Tommy Moore" in 1841.

"Uncle Tommy" was born in Belfast, Ireland, and on his arrival in this country resided for a short time in Zanesville, Ohio, before coming to Indianapolis in the 1830's, to take up a government land grant. His first home was a log cabin where he and his family lived until the large house could be built. The home was built almost entirely from materials found on the land grant.

Mr. Moore, by industry, thrift and good business sense, became very prosperous. The stock farm he established on the grant became widely known and continued in existence until the early 1900's. The estate was known far

and wide as the home of fine horses and cattle. Avalanche, a shorthorn bull, became a champion and was shown all over the country.

A fine orchard of over three hundred apple and cherry trees was located at the rear of the house, and poultry and pea fowl were abundant.

In succeeding years the family became active in the political affairs of the day and many famous personages frequented the home, among them being Herbert Hoover and Thomas A. Hendricks. In later years it became a meeting place for Wabash College men. Dr. Wilmer Christian, the son of Wilmer Christian, was a graduate of Wabash and took an active interest in the college.

While there is no member of the Moore or Christian families living there now, it still remains a cherished landmark of Indianapolis.



T H E S H A W R E S I D E N C E

One of the most interesting homes in Indianapolis is the Shaw Home at 1306 N. Park Avenue.

The home was built in 1848 by Ovid Butler on land he had purchased from William and Horatio McDowell. Mr. Butler named the property "Forest Home" and it became, in the succeeding years, a center of culture as well as political activity. Ovid Butler was active in many fields. He was an accomplished orator, publisher of a newspaper, "Free Soil, Free States, Free Men," lawyer and educator. He held the post of President of Northwestern Christian University, now Butler University, for twenty years, and it was partly due to his many benefactions during this time that the University prospered.

In 1891 the property was bought by John M. Shaw of Kingan and Company. Mr. Shaw was born in Ireland and came to this country when he was twenty-two years of age to enter Kingan and Company in which his family had invested. He was extremely successful and soon became known as the keenest buyer of meat in the country. It is said he could estimate the weight of cattle on the hoof to within a very few pounds. Since Mr. Shaw purchased the property in 1891 it has been continually

occupied by some member of the Shaw family as indeed it is today.

The house itself is a stately edifice surrounded by beautiful Walnut, Ash, Sugar Maple and Elm trees.

There is much of interest about the house itself. The old Porte Cochere, with its imposing Griffins, was once a part of "Bates House" and is an interesting part of the present structure. The Coach House is also a nostalgic reminder of the days of the horse and carriage, and the coach, in which Mr. Shaw rode about Indianapolis, is still there in a remarkable state of preservation.

Many of the fine old pieces of furniture still in the house have extremely interesting histories, such as the beautifully carved black walnut dining room chairs originally made at the order of the Pope as a gift to King Charles V of Spain, and which now adorns the dining room.

This home is certainly one of which we can be proud, having been the residence since 1848 of two cultured and distinguished families, who have brought honor and recognition to our city.



THE BENJAMIN HARRISON HOME

At 1230 North Delaware Street stands the stately old home of the twenty-third President of the United States, bought and restored by the Jordan Foundation. It is often passed by residents of the city without recognition of its historical importance. Yet this home was the residence of President Benjamin Harrison, who lived there continuously from the time he built it in 1872 until his death there in 1901, except for the years spent in Washington as United States Senator, and later as President.

It was here that General Harrison accepted the nomination for the Presidency, and it was here he returned after his term of office. Here, too, he died, closing a long and distinguished life of service to his country. It is a place heavy with the perfume of memory and sheltering within its walls a segment of history. Every citizen of our city and state can be justly proud of that segment of history for Benjamin Harrison was a good President, intensely patriotic and deeply religious.

It is to him we owe the deep reverence for our country's flag that has become an integral part of our lives.

The old home is now just as it was in the days when Benjamin Harrison lived there. It is a good place to go to recapture something of the spirit which made our country great, to impress again upon ourselves the realization of the debt we owe to those who preceded us, for giving us the great legacy of "Freedom Under Law" we now so much enjoy.

The Harrison family is a distinguished one, having had members of every generation in high public office continuously since Benjamin Harrison V, who was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. His son, William Henry Harrison, was the ninth President of the United States. Few families, indeed, can equal this record of public service.

Here indeed is a shrine, a symbol of high ideals and noble aspirations. You owe it to yourself to visit the home of the man who received the highest honor this nation can bestow, and who in turn gave this nation a pride in its past, and a faith in its future.



THE JOSEPH TROST RESIDENCE

One of the interesting old homes in Indianapolis is the Trost Homestead and Cider Mill at 1075 S. Tibbs Avenue.

The Trost Homestead was built in 1879 by John B. Trost who immigrated here from Leipersloh, Bavaria, in 1851 to escape compulsory Military Service in which he did not believe. In the year 1858 John Trost married a Miss Elizabeth Osbrook of Cincinnati and built the Homestead twenty-one years after his marriage. From 1858 to 1879 Mr. and Mrs. Trost lived in a log home on the site of the present Homestead and established the first Cider Mill in this part of the country in connection with it. Since that time the Cider Mill has been in continuous operation by members of the Trost family down to the present day and is now operated by Joseph Trost, the grandson of John B. Trost.

The Trost family has lived continuously in the Homestead since its building, and have earned their living by truck farming on the twenty acre tract adjoining and by operation of the Cider Mill.

One of the interesting facts in connection with the actual building of the Homestead was that Mrs. Elizabeth Trost, although totally blind at the time of building, figured the number of bricks that would be needed in the construction so accurately that the number left over could be carried away in a hod.

John B. Trost, during his lifetime, became well known through this area as a breeder of Shetland ponies, an activity he pursued as a hobby. After his death the Homestead passed to John Trost, Jr. who continued the Cider Mill and truck farming as had his father.

John B. Trost, Jr. had three sons and one daughter, and the present owner, Joseph Trost, is one of the sons.

Thus the Trost Homestead is notable as the residence of three generations of industrious and thrifty Americans who have contributed their share to the growth and stability of our city.



T H E C H I L D E R S H O M E S T E A D

In the year 1818, the United States Government made a treaty with the Delaware Indians who, in addition to other areas, occupied the entire area on which Indianapolis now stands, and who had an encampment in a grove of Maple trees on the present site of the Abraham Lincoln School at the corner of Barth and Palmer Streets.

In the year 1822 William Sanders acquired 240 acres in this vicinity from the government, and started the erection of a home. The site selected was at what is now the intersection of Barth and Palmer Streets. The house was designed as a home for the Sanders family, and as quarters for farm hands. The design was extremely good for the purpose, and the construction so sturdy that the house still stands essentially as it was originally built except for the addition of a sun porch to replace the loss of a long unenclosed porch lost in a severe storm. The house was built from the first brick ever made in the state. This brick has since been covered over to prevent further deterioration from the elements.

Since 1823 the house has been occupied by the families of William Sanders, John Wood, W. L. Ketchum, Jacob Birkenmeyer, the Twinames, and presently by Mrs. Jennie M. Childers whose husband Frank R. Childers bought the house in 1914.

The main portion of the house consists of six rooms which form the living quarters for the family. The dining room and kitchen are detached, and joined to the main portion by a brick passageway. The quarters for the farm hands were built above the dining room with access by separate stairway.

During the course of construction, William Sanders was driven from the site by unfriendly Delaware Indians but returned in 1823 to finish the work. This house, now presently owned and occupied by members of the Childers family, is said to be the oldest residence in the city.

An interesting fact about this house and property is that it had long been thought buried treasure was located somewhere on the site. Soon after purchase of the property, Mr. Childers was besieged by numbers of would-be treasure hunters asking for permission to search for the valuables supposed to be located there. Mr. Childers did, in fact, allow several persons to institute a search, and for some time thereafter the property was the scene of feverish activity. In spite of all their efforts, and the aid of the spirit world, which some of the treasure seekers claimed to have at their disposal, no treasure was ever found.



T H E P F A F F R E S I D E N C E

In our city, as in other cities, many fine old residences have passed into the hands of commercial interests as a natural consequence of the city's expansion around its perimeter.

The old Pfaff residence at 1222 N. Pennsylvania Street is one of these. It is now the Home Office of the Franklin General Insurance Company.

In the rush of progress the history that lies behind these old homes tends to become obscure. It is well, therefore, to pause and refresh our memories of the people and the times of which these old homes are the remaining symbols.

Originally, this old home had a long porch across the front. It was altered to its present appearance after the purchase of the property from the Griffin family by Dr. and Mrs. Pfaff in 1900. Prior to the occupancy of the home by the Griffin family it was occupied by the Whittier family. In 1886 it became the residence of the Reverend Albert Rondthaler,

who was then pastor of the Tabernacle Presbyterian Church.

Dr. and Mrs. Pfaff took great pride in this old residence and added the stately pillars which are such a lovely feature of the property as it is today. There can still be seen the remains of the sunken flower garden on the south side of the house, which Mrs. Pfaff tended with great care. Dr. and Mrs. Pfaff gathered together a most beautiful and complete collection of antique furniture, each piece the finest of its kind. Family heirlooms, imported wall-papers, china and clocks of many origins, all woven into one complete whole, made this house a thing of beauty and distinction.

As in most cases of this kind, the Franklin General Insurance Company has been careful to preserve as much of the charm and atmosphere as is consistent with their requirements. Whatever its ultimate fate this old home will always be thought of as the Pfaff residence, and will reflect in some measure their personalities.



T H E J U L I A N H O M E S T E A D

In Irvington, at 115 South Audubon Road, stands the former residence of George W. Julian, member of Congress, militant abolitionist, and the first exponent of Women's Suffrage in National councils.

This house was built in the year 1873, after Mr. Julian had completed his second term in Congress. He selected Irvington as the home site, convinced it had possibilities of becoming one of the largest cities in the Middle West. Irvington was founded by Mr. Julian's brother, Jacob B. Julian, and Sylvester Johnson, in 1871.

The old home is now the Huff Sanitarium run by Mrs Michael Sullivan, who acquired it from Mrs. Gertrude Huff. It is perhaps fitting that the former home of a great humanitarian should ultimately house the aged and infirm.

Mr. Julian's public life was in an era of great events, and his public utterances on the issues of the day showed him as a man of wisdom and vision. His first term, beginning in 1849 in the administration of Zachary Taylor, was at a time when Zachary Taylor was urging the admission of California as a state, and when the new Repre-

sentative from Illinois, Abraham Lincoln, was beginning to make his influence felt. Daniel Webster and Henry Clay were closing their days in the Senate at this period of our history, and the stirrings of violent disagreement between the States on the issue of slavery were becoming sharper and more bitter.

Prior to his service in the Congress Mr. Julian served in the Indiana General Assembly where he opposed capital punishment and the practice of the Assembly of granting divorces without facts or supporting evidence or testimony.

In this house many of the famous people of the day were entertained. Susan B. Anthony, Mary A. Livermore, Parker Pillsbury, and the great Woman Suffragette, Sojourner Smith, all found a welcome here. It was a home of culture and refinement occupied by a man of strong character, vision and understanding. The impress of his personality is still in the old home even though the records and trophies of his existence are now removed.

Here again is a remaining symbol of a man and an era.



T H E J A M E S O N H O M E

The beautiful and historic home of Mrs. Ovid Butler Jameson at 1035 N. Pennsylvania Street is one of the old landmarks of the city. It is presently owned and occupied by the I. W. Cotton Company who purchased the property some time after 1924 when the Knight Realty Company acquired it from the Jameson heirs.

This home was a gathering place for most of the prominent and interesting people of the time. Mrs. Jameson, sister of Booth Tarkington, author and club-woman, was the intimate friend of most of the significant people of her era, and she entertained most of them in this old residence. Among those people who came to know the Jameson Home, were Woodrow Wilson, Alexander Woollcott, Helen Hayes, Alfred Lunt, William Dean Howells, Henry James, Otis Skinner, Ethel Barrymore, Richard Mansfield, Benjamin Harrison, Arnold Bennett and James Whitcomb Riley.

Truly this was a house of culture. Here the greats of many kinds of human endeavor met, and discussed the issues of the day, their interests and perhaps their hopes

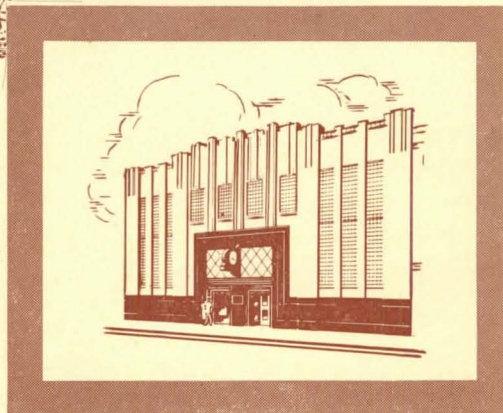
and aspirations. What a record for posterity would be made if the old walls of this beautiful residence could echo the burden of these discussions!

"Barley Bright," as Mrs. Jameson called her home, is a fine example of Virginia Colonial with fluted white Ionic pillars surmounted by a Greek pediment. A wide central hall extends seventy five feet through the house giving on rooms whose ceilings are eighteen feet in height. In these rooms the "Tarkington Players" gave the first performance of Booth Tarkington's "Seventeen" and thus became the predecessor to the Little Theatre of Indianapolis.

In the library many state functions were held during the residency of Mrs. Jameson, carrying on the tradition started by the "Statesman Bishop" Edward R. Ames of the Methodist diocese, who built the house about 1854 and was a powerful influence in Indiana politics.

"Barley Bright" is a landmark of which we can all be proud, having played its part in establishing our city as a center of culture and refinement.

1887



In the years since 1887, when Railroadmen's Federal Savings and Loan Association was founded, the constant aim of its officers and staff has been to better serve the people of our community, and to look for its own growth and prosperity in this ideal.

Railroadmen's believe that this approach to its business life results in better integration of its functions with the everyday life of the community, and enables them to serve its members with understanding and efficiency.

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